

CHARLIE MELANCON
3RD DISTRICT, LOUISIANA

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY
AND COMMERCE

COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



Congress of the United States House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

June 24, 2010

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Carl-Henrik Svanberg
Chairman of the Board, BP
200 Westlake Park Blvd.
Houston, TX 77079

Dear Chairman Svanberg:

As we enter the third month of the Deepwater Horizon oil leak, it is becoming increasingly clear that Louisianians living along the Gulf are not only suffering economically from this disaster, but also struggling emotionally from the stress and uncertainty of this tragedy. Over the past five years, these communities have been devastated by one disaster after another, and this turmoil has taken its toll. Although many non-profit agencies are doing their best to meet the needs of these communities, an influx of mental and behavioral health services are desperately needed in these areas.

Catholic Charities reported this past week that they had referred over 1,500 people for counseling because of signs of depression, and officials from the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals have counseled over 700 people. As I am sure you are aware, the Vietnamese community in south Louisiana has been especially hard hit by this disaster. I have included a letter from the New Orleans East LA Community Health Center (NOELA CHC) which describes their need for any additional funding to assist with their mental health outreach to the Vietnamese community. Additionally, I have held two town hall meetings where these issues were raised, and I continue to hear from people in the area about the concerns they have for the well-being of their families.

I implore you to seriously address the issue of mental and behavioral health problems being identified along the Gulf Coast and specifically in Louisiana. These problems are directly related to the disaster that your company has caused. Although financial restitution to the affected residents of Louisiana is imperative, it is equally important that you make them whole with regards to their mental and emotional health. Today I call on you to make a significant contribution to non-profit organizations in the area which are on the ground identifying and helping families in need. These groups are working tirelessly to provide services to workers and families who are experiencing unimaginable levels of stress and anxiety as they watch their livelihoods and their very way of life disappear.

Again, please do not let our people continue to suffer. Your company has the financial resources available to ensure that mental and behavioral health services are provided. Last year, BP's top five executives received a total of almost \$10 million in bonus payments. Even if just one of your Board Members would donate his or her bonus to mental and behavioral health services, hundreds of residents could receive the help they so desperately need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles J. Melancon", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

CHARLES J. MELANCON
MEMBER OF CONGRESS